

Dear Chairs Linehan and Anwar, Vice Chairs Welander and Bradley, Ranking Members Martin and Dauphinais, and Members of the Committee on Children,

My name is Olivia Brooke Sally. I am a resident of New Haven and am testifying to communicate my strong support for Connecticut's SB2: *An Act Concerning The Safety, Education And Social Equity Of Children In Response To The Pandemic*.

As someone with two younger sisters, I have observed the difficulties of remote learning and the social isolation they have faced. Even more, across the state of CT, public schools remain quite segregated. There is a \$639 million funding gap between public school districts with BIPOC student populations of at least 25% and districts with white student populations greater than 75% ([CT School & State Finance Report](#)), so it is often students of color with fewer mental health resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenges students face every day. The effects of this pandemic, especially in children and adolescents will be felt for years, even after everyone has returned to in-person learning. SB2 seeks to address these new challenges to quality formal and informal education. Data shows that lower-income students and students of color are disproportionately impacted by the current lack of mental health access in schools. Passing this bill would be a crucial step in addressing and improving the social-emotional and educational outcomes of all students in the state.

I strongly support SB 2 and urge you to favorably vote the bill out of the Committee on Children.

Sincerely,

Olivia Brooke Sally,
New Haven, CT